Government of India

(i) Continuation of existing VRS grants upto 31st March, 2004 which has been agreed to by Government of India.

(ii) Streamlining the procedure for the sanction of coal projects.

The total financial involvement of relief and concessions on various heads such as waiver of electricity duty for 5 years, waiver of interest on unsecured loans, waiver of service charges, waiver of unsecured loan etc. from State Government, Central Government and Coal India Ltd. is to the extent of Rs. 5348.93 crores.

Initiatives taken to increase investment in coal-mines sector

701. SHRI R.P. GOENKA: Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that some fresh initiatives, like the single window project-clearance mechanism etc., have been taken to increase investment in the coal-mines sector; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and their present status?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COAL (DR. DASARI NARAYANA RAO): (a) and (b) Initiatives have been taken to eliminate unnecessary layers in decision making in sanctioning of coal projects and in streamlining the procedure for environment and forestry clearances.

Private participation in coal sector

702. SHRIMATI N.P. DURGA: Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have prepared draft Coal Mines Nationalisation (Amendment) Bill to facilitate the private participation in the coal sector to enable the Government to give coal blocks to private companies for captive mining;

(b) if so, the salient features of the proposed amendment;

(c) whether any consultations have been made with the representatives in this regard; and

(d) if so, the outcome of the discussions?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COAL (DR. DASARI NARAYANA RAO): (a) and (b) The Coal Mines (Nationalisation) Act, 1973, as amended in June 1993, provides for mining of coal by any Indian company for some specified end-uses, implying captive consumption of coal. However, presently Ministry of Coal is considering a proposal to amend the Coal Mines (Nationalisation) Act,1973 to enable the Government to allot coal blocks for the said specified end-uses on competitive bidding basis. Bill to this effect will be drafted only after the Central Government decides on the proposal.

(c) A meeting was held with some stakeholders on 28.6.2004 in which *inter alia* introduction of competitive bidding as basis for allocation of captive coal blocks was discussed.

(d) Some stakeholders were in favour of it and some opposed its introduction.

Rehabilitation of excavated mines

703. SHRI PYARIMOHAN MOHAPATRA: Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to state:

(a) the steps taken by Mahanadi Coalfields Limited for backfilling and full rehabilitation of excavated mines; and

(b) the reasons for very slow and tardy progress in such rehabilitation and the remedial measures proposed to be taken thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COAL (DR. DASARI NARAYANA RAO): (a) Adequate steps as stipulated in the Environmental Management Plan (EMP) and Project Report (PR) of each mine approved by competent authority is taken for backfilling of excavated mine void and rehabilitation of land in MCL.

The steps involved are:

1. Back filling of the de-coaled area.
2. Leveling/terracing of the back filled area.
3. Spreading of top soil over the back filled area.
4. Biological reclamation/plantation over the back filled area.